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High altitude organic gold: the production network for *Ophiocordyceps sinensis* from far-western Nepal

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Abstract

Ethnopharmacological relevance

Ophiocordyceps sinensis (Berk.) G.H.Sung, J.M.Sung, Hywel-Jones & Spatafora, a high altitude Himalayan fungus-caterpillar product found in alpine meadows in China, Bhutan, Nepal, and India, has been used in the Traditional Chinese Medicine system for over 2000 years. Heightened demand in China over the past 15 years, coupled with limited production, has led to a price hike and increased economic importance of harvests to rural households throughout the species' range. There is, however, limited knowledge on the actors and profit distribution in the *O. sinensis* production network, especially from the distribution areas on the southern flanks of the Himalayas. Filling in this knowledge gap is essential to the identification and design of public interventions.

Aim of the study

¹ Co-author contribution statement: All three co-authors designed the study, Dipesh Pyakurel was in charge of data collection, Mariève Pouliot was in charge of data analysis, all three co-authors equally responsible for manuscript writing and editing.

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